

DEUTERONOMY 6–8; 15; 18; 29–30; 34

Introduction

The following "Witnessing Christ from the Old Testament" study covers [Deuteronomy 6–8; 15; 18; 29–30; 34](#).

[You can find the LDS outline of study and resources here.](#)

LDS Study Focus

LDS study resources teach:

Moses's earthly ministry began on a mountain, when God spoke to him from a burning bush (see [Exodus 3:1–10](#)). It also ended on a mountain, more than 40 years later, when God gave Moses a glimpse of the promised land from the top of Mount Nebo (see [Deuteronomy 34:1–4](#)). Moses had spent his life preparing the children of Israel to enter that promised land, and the book of Deuteronomy records his final instructions, reminders, exhortations, and pleadings with the Israelites. Reading his words makes it clear that the real object of Moses's ministry—the preparation the people needed—wasn't about wilderness survival, conquering nations, or building a community. It was about learning to love God, obey Him, and remain loyal to Him. That's the preparation we all need in order to enter the promised land of eternal life. So while Moses never set foot in the "land flowing with milk and honey" ([Exodus 3:8](#)), because of his faith and faithfulness, he did enter the promised land that God has prepared for all those who follow Him.

Biblical Focus

Imagine the kind of a speech a father might give his son before heading off to college. Moses is preparing the Israelites for their transition from being children of the wilderness to children of the promised land. Repeated throughout the book of Deuteronomy are words like "listen, remember, guard, keep, do, and obey."

But was there hope for these people to do what God asked them? Time and again, the Israelites proved that they were weak, untrusting, idolatrous failures. Why would they do better in the promised land? In Deuteronomy 31 (skipped in this section), God prophesied to his people through Moses about their impending failure, knowing that his people would be idolatrous and unfaithful to him. The God that demanded faithful obedience knew that it was not possible.

Why did God remain faithful to Israel? Why was there hope? Hope only existed because Israel's God held the knife that circumcised hearts.

Deuteronomy 30:6 "The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live."

DEUTERONOMY 6-8

Consider everything that this generation knew or didn't know. Many of these Israelites had been born in the wilderness. They only knew about their people's time in Egypt from the stories their parents and grandparents told. With manna on the ground each day, this generation never needed to search or work for food. God even miraculously provided water for them. They did not even need to concern themselves with their clothing and shoes. God had sustained them, and Moses had led them faithfully.

The book of Deuteronomy is Moses' final words to the Israelites before he died and before they entered the promised land. After that, God's provisions for them would change, and so would the temptations around them.

Moses spent a lot of time reminding the Israelites about all God had done for them in his farewell speeches. God brought them out of slavery; God preserved them in the wilderness; God would give them the promised land. But on the other hand, Moses does not spend any time reminding the Israelites of anything they had done. Their redemption and salvation were pure gifts!

Transactional language in these chapters might be a challenge in your witnessing conversations. Consider what Moses keeps emphasizing what they are NOT to do. Over and over again, he warns of idolatry (sometimes compared to adultery). Idolatry is the sin that separates people from God's grace and forgiveness because they reject a relationship with him.

Conversation Starters:

- **Consider the command to love God with *all* of your heart and soul. What does *all* mean? How is that going for you? Who was able to do this perfectly?**
- **Why is idolatry the worst sin?**
- **Agree or disagree: Idolatry is the only sin that will destroy your salvation.**

Sharing Personally:

In Deuteronomy 6, God commanded the Israelites to love him with ALL of their hearts. But when I think about what it means to love God with ALL of my heart, I feel afraid. This demand of the law would be a lot easier for me to handle if it said SOME of my heart. Or perhaps I would feel better if it commanded me to love God MORE and MORE each day.

But it says ALL. Now. Not just part and not just eventually.

But then I remember that, through my baptism, I am connected to Jesus. Jesus was the one who could and did love ALL of the time. He fulfilled the demands of this law perfectly. Now I am covered in his righteousness. Because of Jesus, my selfishness has been washed away. God sees my heart just as if it had always loved as perfectly as Jesus did.

DEUTERONOMY 15

LDS resources include this section to remind us to care for the poor. It is beautiful to see how God designed Israel's civil government to provide for all types of people mercifully. There may not be deep witnessing conversations in this chapter, but you can marvel at God's compassion for all people, both in body and soul.

DEUTERONOMY 18

Get ready to bite your tongue and pray for wisdom as this chapter prophesies the coming of false prophets. Remember, the goal is not to lecture but to help your friends think about what the Bible says. Consider how you can use the conversation starters.

Conversation Starters:

- **How were the priests and Levites paid? What did this allow them to spend their time doing?**

Talking about payment to the priests will perhaps bring up a difficult conversation. Mormons do not pay their church leaders and say it is wrong to do so. They believe that those who get paid to do church work have false motives and are untrustworthy. However, perhaps discussing this topic can help give back credibility to Christian pastors.

- **What in these verses is detestable to the Lord?**
- **Who is the prophet like Moses talked about in Deuteronomy 18:15–18?**
- **How are we to test a prophet to know he is genuine? Can a true prophet ever be wrong?**

DEUTERONOMY 29–30

Think about bi-lateral covenants again. Usually, both parties agree to something of equal effort or value. Usually, both parties believe that the other will hold up their end of the bargain. But how different this covenant was!

What did God all do for Israel? What would he continue to do? God did all the work and gave all of the gifts. Now, look at what he demanded of his people? There isn't a long list of "do" and "do not" commands in this section. A loving God wants his people to flee from idolatry and believe in him. God wanted to be the God of his people.

What kind of a groom would marry a bride who had been unfaithful to him and who he knew would be unfaithful again in the future? If you read ahead in chapter 31, God prophesied to Moses the bad news. Israel would rebel, worship idols, and break their covenant. Because Israel would faithlessly reject God, they would be forsaken, destroyed, and suffer disasters. God highlights the future failings of Israel to affirm his everlasting love for his people and expose the insufficiency of *this physical* rescue/redemption story.

Isn't it interesting that God shares his desire to forgive and restore his people when they turn back to him? Even before they committed these sins, he was ready to forgive! Can you imagine a judge telling a person who is considering committing a crime that they can be set free from the punishment the crime deserves? What power would the law have? This account is a shocking example of God motivating his

people with pure and undeserved love. The law is powerless to change hearts. Only the gospel, which is the good news of God's undeserved love, can create a lasting, faithful relationship with God.

If you are concerned about what it means to obey with ALL of your heart, great comfort is found in Deuteronomy 30:6. The Lord is the one who will circumcise your heart. Through our baptisms, we are connected to the work of Christ. Our sins are removed, and our hearts are made clean.

In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. (Colossians 2:11–13)

God had done mighty things for Israel by setting them free and giving them their own land. These stories would point to the divine rescue that would free people from the greater enemy of sin and bring believers to heaven's more extraordinary promised land.

Conversation Starters:

- **Why do you think God gave obedience commands right after a section describing all that God had done for Israel?**
- **Why did God make a covenant with a people he knew would be unfaithful?**
- **Study Deuteronomy 30:6. How is it possible to love God with all our hearts?**

Sharing Personally:

Can you imagine a judge telling a person who is considering committing a crime that they can be set free from the punishment the crime deserves? What power would the law have? Why would anyone obey?

Is God a judge like this in Deuteronomy 29–30? He tells Israel that they will be cursed, forsaken, and their names blotted out from under heaven if they reject him, but then God turns and promises to restore and gather back his repentant children compassionately. Did God destroy Israel's motivation to obey?

This story is a shocking example of God demonstrating that he wants a personal relationship with his people. He motivates them with his pure and undeserved love. The law is powerless to change hearts. Only the gospel, which is the good news of God's undeserved love, can create a lasting, faithful relationship with him.

DEUTERONOMY 34

Good-bye Moses, Hello Joshua

Moses, a faithful preacher and teacher, was a representative of the law. But, significantly, this representative of the law would not lead the Israelites into the promised land. Instead, Joshua, whose name means "Savior," would lead the way and prepare the people for the more incredible Joshua to come in—Jesus, the Savior of the World.

Conversation Starter:

- **How does Joshua leading the people into the promised land parallel our entrance into the everlasting promised land of life with God in the new heavens and the new earth?**